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Homeric and Beowulfian Funeral Rites

Because of their chronology and setting, any relationship between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and that eloquent exponent of old Germanic life, the *Beowulf*, would seem to be extremely remote. Yet, as a matter of fact, the aristocratic life and society so vitally portrayed in these courtly epics furnish a rich study in analogy. A phase of peculiar interest is the similarity between Homeric and Beowulfian funeral rites.

Unique among the funeral rites described in either the Greek or Anglo-Saxon poems is the account of Scyld's famous sea-burial, a descriptive gem of the *Beowulf* epic.¹

Then they bore him over to ocean's billow,
loving clansmen, as late he charged them,
while wielded words the winsome Scyld,
the leader beloved who long had ruled.
In the roadstead rocked a ring-dight vessel,
ice-flecked, outbound, aethling's barge:
there laid they down their darling lord
on the breast of the boat, the breaker-of-rings
by the mast the mighty one. Many a treasure
fetched from far was freighted with him.
No ship have I known so nobly dight
with weapons of war and weeds of battle,
with breastplate and blade: on his bosom lay
a heaped hoard that hence should go
far o'er the flood with him floating away.
No less these loaded the lordly gifts
thanes' huge treasure, than those had done
who in former time forth had sent him
sole on the seas, a suckling child.
High o'er his head they hoist the standard
a gold-wove banner; let billows take him,
gave him to ocean. Grave were their spirits,
mournful their mood. No man is able
to say in sooth, no son of the halls
no hero 'neath heaven—who harbored that fright!

Beowulf 28-52

The Beowulfian account of Scyld's regal funeral is not to be interpreted as a merely symbolical act; it reflects the actual practice of a previous age. Based on the belief that the soul after death had to take a long journey to the realm of spirits, the custom of sea burial arose among various peoples living near the sea or great lakes. Stjerna regards this description of Scyld's funeral as typical of the northern idea of a chieftain's burial and as portraying a custom actually in vogue in Scandinavia from the end of the fourth to the middle of the sixth century, A. D.²

Despite essential differences, several points in Scyld's funeral coincide with other funerals described in the *Beowulf*. Scyld carries with him to his burial the ordinary equipment of a chief,—his sword, his corselet, and his banner. With the body of the king numerous treasures are placed on the "ring-dight"

vessel and war weapons and armor are placed on the dead king's bosom.

Nothing resembling sea-burial is found in the Homeric poems, for to the Greeks a watery grave did not satisfy the requirements of sepulture, although Styx and Acheron were rivers of the dead across which spirits journeyed to the world below.

The importance of proper funeral rites for the newly-dead is amply evident in both the Greek and Anglo-Saxon epics. Thus Homer makes the motive of the reconciliation of Achilles the hero's feeling for the dead Patroclus, and Patroclus' ghost appears to Achilles requesting him to speed his cremation and funeral. A similar concern for the necessary burial rites is seen in the *Beowulf*. The aged councilor, Aeschere, is slain by Grendel's mother and the Danes mourn not only his death, but especially the fact that they are unable to consume the dead man with fire, or lay him on the funeral pyre. For "in her devilish grasp she carried away that body of his beneath the cascade." The poet then adds that for Hrothgar this "was the keenest of woes which the folk's prince had felt for many a long day."³

In the Finn episode, the more general practice of funeral rites among the northern people is etched in a few vivid lines by the *Beowulf* poet. A huge pyre is erected and adorned with armor and gold. On it are solemnly placed the dead bodies of Hnaef, his nephew, and the many aethlings slain by the sword. On the pyre plainly visible to all are the gory sark, the gilded swine crest and boar of hard iron. The sorrowful dirge sung by Hildeburh is accompanied by choral wailing of the throng, while "the wildest of death-fires roared o'er the hillock."⁴

A parallel instance of group cremation occurs in the *Iliad*.⁵ Agamemnon declares a truce to allow time for burial of both Greeks and Trojans:

But as concerning the dead, I grudge you not to burn them; for dead corpses is there no stinting, when they once are dead, of the swift propitiation of fire.

Wood is hastily collected for the pyres, and the bodies, washed clean of clotted gore, are heaped upon them and consumed. In the evening the Achaeans gather round their pyre and make one common barrow about it. Lofty towers are attached to it that it may serve as a bulwark for themselves and their ships.⁶

It is in the case of the three famous fire-funerals of Hector, Patroclus, and Achilles, however, that we get the most detailed information regarding Homeric funeral rites. When the body of Hector has been ransomed, it is bathed and anointed by the serving women of Achilles, wrapped in a tunic, covered with a mantle

and laid on a bier. On its return to Troy it is met before the city gates by the Trojans, and Hector's wife and mother hasten to the wagon and embrace the dead. When the body is brought to the palace, minstrels are set beside it to sing a dirge, while the women of the place groan and shriek in response. Then in succession, Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen sing brief lyric laments, to which the women of the place respond as before. For nine days the Trojans bring in measureless wood, and on the tenth day they place the body on the topmost pyre and cast fire upon it. The following morning the flames are extinguished by wine. Some idea of the size of the pyre may be gleaned from the fact that the wine quenched the flames as far as they had come on the pyre, which had burned all night, yet was far from being entirely consumed. The brethren and comrades of Hector collect the white bones of the dead hero and place them in a golden urn covered with a soft purple robe. The urn itself is then placed in a hollow grave which is covered with great close-set stones. They then speedily heap the mound. The barrow completed, they return to the palace of Priam for the funeral fast.⁷

One princely military funeral, that of Patroclus, is described in the *Iliad*. The body of Patroclus is brought to the tent of Achilles, bathed in warm water, and anointed. It is then covered with a soft linen cloth, wrapped in a mantle, and laid upon a couch which serves as a bier, with the feet towards the door. All night long, Achilles, with his hands laid upon his friend's breast, leads the lamentations of the Achaeans. Agamemnon sends men and mules to the foot-hills of Mt. Ida to bring wood to the shore for the funeral pile. Achilles bids his Myrmidons gird themselves as for battle, and prepare their chariots. The chariots bearing the knights lead the way, the infantry follow. In the midst, his comrades bear the body of Patroclus, covered with the locks of hair which they have cut off as a sign of mourning. Achilles, bearing his friend's head, follows the corpse as chief mourner. When they reach the place appointed for the pyre, Achilles cuts off his long, tawny hair and places it in the hands of Patroclus. The pyre is built a hundred-feet square, and the body, wrapped from head to foot in the fat of many kine, is laid upon it at the center, while the carcasses of the beasts are laid on the outer part of the pyre. Jars of honey and oil are set against the bier. Four sprightly coursers are killed and thrown on the pyre, also two large dogs, favorites of the deceased, and lastly, twelve Trojans become fell captives of the flames. All night long Achilles moves slowly by the side of the pyre pouring wine upon the ground and calling upon the soul of his comrade. In the morning the coals are quenched with wine, the bones of Patroclus are collected and placed between a double layer of fat to preserve them from disintegration and are then laid in a golden basin or urn. This urn is wrapped in a soft cloth and set in Achilles' hut, to await his death. Achilles gives orders that a temporary mound should be reared on the site of the pyre, which for the time being is a cenotaph.

The funeral of Achilles, undoubtedly the most mag-

nificent of the three, is not described in detail, though the salient features are like the other two. The body of the hero is wrapped in incorruptible raiment and the dead chief is mourned seventeen days and nights, the Muses themselves acting as the singing women. On the eighteenth day the body is consigned to the flames of the pyre. Well-fatted sheep are slain and put on the body also, probably to intensify the conflagration. Mail-clad Greeks, both infantry and charioteers, move about the pyre while it burns, and in the morning the white bones are collected and placed in unmixed wine and unguents in a golden urn, the gift of Thetis. Then over the urn containing the ashes of Achilles, to which have been added those of Patroclus, the Argive warriors pile a great and goodly tomb high on a jutting headland over wide Hellespont,—a landmark to his own and future generations. The funeral rites are followed by the well-known funeral games, the prizes for which are offered by Achilles' mother, Thetis.⁸

In the funeral rites of these three heroes the customs of inhumation are combined with those of incineration. In contradistinction from the two burials already referred to in the *Beowulf*, nothing is said of burying arms or other treasures with the bones. The argument *ex silentio* is not conclusive, however, and it is to be noted in this connection that Elpenor requests such service of Odysseus:⁹

there I exhort thee, my lord, to be mindful of me and not to leave me behind unlamented and unburied, abandoning me when thou goest away, lest I bring down wrath from the gods upon thee. But burn me up with my arms, all that I possess, and construct for me a barrow upon the shore of the grey sea, the memorial of the unfortunate man, so that I shall be known even to those who shall be hereafter.

Eetion's arms were buried with him also, and Andromache speaks of this as a fitting honor for a brave man.¹⁰ The sacrifice of the Trojan prisoners at the funeral of Patroclus is exceptional,—a trait of unique ferocity intended to mark the frenzy of grief of Achilles.¹¹

In the Anglo-Saxon epic, the funeral that most strikingly resembles these famous funeral ceremonies of the classical epics, is that of the hero Beowulf. Wiglaf, loyal kinsman and thane, takes command of the Geats after Beowulf's death and presides over the King's obsequies. He orders his many heroes to "hastily bring from far firewood for the famed-one's funeral." The body is borne on a bier to Hrones-Ness where the Geats fashion a huge funeral pyre, and hang about it helmets, harness of war and breastplates. The body of the beloved chieftain is placed upon the pyre and the warriors kindle the "hugest of bale-fires" while they mourn audibly for the deceased. The old widow, presumably Beowulf's, loudly laments the death of the hero and her dread of the days to come.

The Geats spend ten days fashioning the mound,—the "battle-brave's beacon." The mound is constructed over the ashes of the pyre and treasures from the dragon's hoard are buried with Beowulf. After the mound is built it is covered over with earth. A band of twelve aethlings ride round the barrow and chant a mournful dirge, in which they praise the dead king's earliness, his mildness, and kindness.¹²

Beowulf himself, shortly before his death, gave instructions to Wiglaf regarding the position of the grave-mound:

A barrow bid ye the battle-famed raise
for my ashes. 'Twill shine by the shore of the flood,
To folk of mine memorial fair
on Hrones Headland high uplifted,
that ocean-wanderers oft may hail
Beowulf's Barrow, as back from far
They drive their keels o'er the darkling waves.¹²

An almost literal parallel of this passage occurs in the *Odyssey* in reference to the burial place of Achilles:¹³

Then over them did we pile a great and goodly tomb,
we the holy host of Argive warriors, high on a jutting
headland over the wide Hellespont, that it might be
seen from off the sea by men that now are, and by
those that shall be hereafter.

From this cursory study of the funeral rites in the Greek and Anglo-Saxon epics it appears that the only method used by the Homeric Greeks for the disposal of their dead was cremation with cairn burial. From the *Beowulf* it is evident that both Danes and Geats employed corpse-burning and the Geats at least used also burnt-graves in a cairn or mound. Among the Homeric Greeks weapons were sometimes buried with the bodies, but, judging from the three most famous fire-funerals described, this was not consistently practiced. All the funerals in the *Beowulf* include disposal of the arms of the deceased with the corpse. Other minor points of similarity may still be noted. Haste in procuring the necessary funeral rites is characteristic of both Greeks and Teutons.¹⁴ Whereas loss of funeral rites was regarded by both as a dire misfortune, the thing most dreaded was exposure of the body to be devoured by animals and birds of prey. Again, both used a bier for removing the body to the place of the funeral pyre, and a *praefica* (with differences) is found in both Greek and Teutonic practice. The laments often express forebodings of the future. The erection of funeral mounds on elevated places near the sea is well attested from old Norse and Anglo-Saxon times, and from the frequent references in the Greek epics it was evidently the usual location for the heroes' grave-mounds among the Homeric Greeks. The funeral ceremonies in both cases are in proportion to the rank of the deceased.

That the poet of the *Beowulf* was in any way influenced by classical models is more than an idle guess, though incontrovertible proof is difficult to obtain. At any rate, it is interesting to note that in both the Greek and the Anglo-Saxon poems funeral rites have been among the strongest internal evidence in determining the *termini ante quem et post quem* of the two epics.

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SISTER MARY INEZ, S.N.D.

NOTES

1. Francis B. Gunmere, *Oldest English Epic*. Macmillan, 1925.
2. Knut Stjerna, *Essays on Beowulf*, translated and edited by John R. Clark Hall, Ph.D., Viking Club, Society for Northern Research, University of London, King's College, 1912; p. 127.
3. Gunmere, *l.c.*, *Beowulf*, 2125-2130.
4. Gunmere, *l.c.*, *Beowulf*, 1119-20.
5. *Iliad* 7, 407-410. The quotation is taken from *The Iliad of Homer*, translated by Andrew Lang, Walter Leaf, and Ernest Myers. Macmillan, 1915.

6. A passage of striking similarity occurs in *Aeneid* 11, 182-212.
7. *Iliad* 24, 760-804. For Patroclus' funeral, see *Iliad* 23, 93-262.
8. *Odyssey* 24, 54-85. *The Odyssey of Homer*, translated into English by S. H. Butcher and A. Lang. Macmillan, 1912.
9. *Odyssey* 11, 71-78.
10. *Iliad* 6, 418.
11. Gunmere, *l.c.*, *Beowulf* 3137-3177.
12. Gunmere, *l.c.*, *Beowulf* 2802-2808.
13. *Odyssey* 24, 80-84.
14. *Beowulf* 3105; *Iliad* 23, 71.

The Cleveland Classical Convention

A large and interested gathering attended the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, held at the Wade Park Manor Hotel, in Cleveland, April 9, 10 and 11.

At the business meeting on the morning of April 11, Professor Charles C. Mierow, of Carleton College, was chosen president of the Association for 1936-1937; Miss Lucy C. Pritchard, of Marshall College, was named first vice-president; Professor F. S. Dunham, of the University of Michigan, was returned to the office of secretary-treasurer; and Professor Norman W. DeWitt, of Victoria College, University of Toronto, succeeded Professor Eugene Tavenner, of Washington University, as member of the executive committee. Professor Tavenner will continue as editor and business manager of *The Classical Journal*. The annual meeting of 1937 will be held in Nashville, Tennessee.

Saint Louis University
St. Louis, Mo.

WILLIAM CHARLES KORFMACHER

Interscholastic Latin Contest, 1935-1936

Held on December 12, 1935, between all the Jesuit high schools of the Middle West with the following results:

1. Frank de la Vega, Creighton U. High, Omaha, Neb.
 2. Arthur McDonald, Creighton U. High, Omaha, Neb.
 3. Francis Donahue, Creighton U. High, Omaha, Neb.
 4. Edward Cincoski, St. Ignatius High, Chicago, Ill.
 4. William Molo, Rockhurst High, Kansas City, Mo.
 6. Henry Kohl, St. Ignatius High, Chicago, Ill.
 7. Mario Salvador, St. Ignatius High, Chicago, Ill.
 8. John P. Moloney, St. John's High, Toledo, O.
 9. Theodore Janoski, St. Louis U. High, St. Louis, Mo.
 10. Daniel Murphy, Loyola High, Chicago, Ill.
- Total points: Creighton 27, St. Ignatius 15½, Rockhurst 6½, St. John's 3, St. Louis 2, Loyola 1.

Intercollegiate Latin Contest, 1935-1936

Held on March 26, 1936, and participated in by all the Jesuit colleges of the Middle West with the following awards:

1. Chester Neudling, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.
 2. Frank Bartz, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis.
 3. F. Guibor Townsend, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.
 4. James E. Sager, University of Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
 5. Raymond Kemble, Xavier University, Cincinnati, O.
 6. Warren McGrath, Loyola University, Chicago, Ill.
 7. Patrick J. Kremer, University of Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
 8. J. H. Perkins, St. John's College Toledo, O.
 9. Theodore Hable, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis.
 10. George V. Murray, University of Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
- Total points: St. Louis 18, Detroit 12, Marquette 11, Xavier 6, St. John's 3.

According to his mood and the context Plato's style ranges from Attic simplicity to metaphysical abstraction, from high-flown poetical prose to plain colloquial diction.—Paul Shorey.

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Vol. XII

JUNE, 1936

No. 9

Editorial

As this is the last issue of the current volume of the CLASSICAL BULLETIN, the editors take occasion to thank subscribers for their continued encouragement and support. Do not forget to renew your subscription for next year, and when you do so, let us know what sort of articles you are chiefly interested in. The editors have been urged at various times to expand the scope of the BULLETIN. Would you stand with us in case such expansion—say from the present eight to a twelve page issue—should be deemed feasible in the near future?

Conservatism was profoundly ingrained in the Roman psyche. Perhaps the best proof of this was the Roman attachment to the *mos maiorum*. The name of Cato spontaneously springs to our lips as we search for an individual uncompromisingly dedicated to this attitude. We have always vaguely felt that Cicero, too, had a valid claim to the title of Champion of the *mos* and *auctoritas maiorum*, but it is only quite recently that the documentary evidence has been sifted and made accessible to us in convenient form: such in brief is the merit of a doctoral dissertation entitled "Wesen und Wirkung der *Auctoritas Maiorum* bei Cicero," by the Rev. Joseph C. Plumpe, now at the Josephinum at Worthington, Ohio. Cicero, it should be remembered, was a *Philhellen*, as he called himself, a *Graeculus*, as some of his countrymen styled him (Plutarch); but his absorption of the Greek spirit did not stifle his Roman sympathies. On his lips the *laus maiorum* was more than an encomium of deceased Romans, more than mere *epideixis*, for to him, as to every true Roman, the *mos maiorum* was a source of light and life. As *auctoritas* in general was conceived as the very personal prerogative of advising and prescribing, often with the force of law, so the *auctoritas maiorum* was

a link that bound the living and the dead into one grand community in which Law reigned supreme. In this community, with its paramount interest in the welfare of the Roman state, the past and the present joined hands, inasmuch as the *mos maiorum* continued to be valid legislation. And even the future entered into this magnificent union, because the living Romans, though for the time being the *maiorum posterius*, were naturally destined one day to be ranked among the *posterorum maiores*. The six well and warmly written chapters of this thesis, totaling no more than 74 pages, are neatly introduced by what we might call a tableau, intended at the outset to put us in a sympathetic mood: a description of the funeral of a noble Roman, on the basis of Polybius VI, 53-54, which shows that the *cultus maiorum* was not the privilege of an aristocratic clique, but the deep-felt concern of every *vir vere Romanus*.

With regard to our editorial in the May issue on the questionable usefulness of two-year Latin courses in high school, our readers will be interested to know that the case for the retention of such courses is tersely stated in the May number of *Latin Notes*.

The business office of the CLASSICAL BULLETIN will be closed from June 15 until August 15. Orders cannot be filled during that time, and correspondence is subject to delay.

The Vanishing of Latin

To many students Latin is proving a stumbling-block. To-day, when pupils leave the grade school innocent of the elements of English grammar, the task of learning Latin by the methods of bygone days seems to many insurmountable. What has been the result? Little or no Latin in the high school; and to prospective students of college, concession after concession has been made, even to the granting of the A.B. degree without any Latin. Do we realize what the vanishing of Latin means? Do we stop to think that it means the loss of a culture which represents what is best in human thought?

For years the staple Latin courses in high school were: First Year Latin, Caesar's Commentaries, Cicero's Orations, and Vergil's Aeneid. Year after year students faced "Foundations in Latin" under various titles. One declension followed another with dizzy monotony; conjugations went the same weary way; exercises were composed of such literary gems as "Mary sees the sailor," "Galba has a sword." No illustrations broke the printed page. Meaningless translations, like "O table," "of the queen," "I have been killed," must have puzzled the budding intelligence of children who did any thinking at all. All this may have been good for the child; without doubt it was valuable memory training, and it helped to develop the splendid memories of our forbears. To-day too little memorizing is done, too little thinking is demanded of the pupil. Children to-day, we have been told, frankly object to memory work, and, frankly, we do not dare impose very much.

For years we treated our boys and girls in second year to Caesar's involved periodic constructions with all his details of wars. Then followed Cicero with his well-rounded sentences, which are the joy of the Latin scholar. But he came stammeringly, in fragments, from the lips of those generally too immature to appreciate the great orator. Next Vergil, on whose lines Augustus and his circle hung in admiration, was handed over for mutilation to boys and girls in their "teens."

To-day, admittedly, there is a great change. In the hands of the pupils are books with delightful illustrations; stories of the days of old, but so modern in tone as to make an appeal even to sophisticated minds in the twentieth century. Gaily colored charts adorn the walls of the classroom. A Latin exhibit is held; a Roman house of cardboard is put together, decorated, and furnished in Roman style; moving pictures bring vividly before the eyes the tragedy of Pompeii. Instead of "Caesar," there is "Second Year Latin," still offering some Caesar, but with the addition of suitable stories, and "The Argonauts," to offset the great master's difficult reading, and Ovid's "fairy tales" help to brighten the road that used to be so cheerless.

Much, therefore, has been done to cater to the taste of the present generation. No one will chide us for taking cognizance in the classroom of the altered conditions of life around us. Without going into detail, let us simply say: since we are living in a different world, our approach to any kind of studies must be different. This applies with double force to the ancient classics. Our boys and girls look for a different door by which to enter into the blessings that Greece and Rome can yet bestow. But, while much has been done to yield to modern conditions, evidently such yielding cannot go on forever. It is our business, as classical teachers, to call a halt to this tendency, if it turns out to be a downward tendency. The supreme need of the hour is to bethink ourselves, to rouse our sense of responsibility, to count the cost either way, and to make a strenuous effort, especially in First and Second Year Latin, to check excessive inroads of the modern taste. We are doing a noble work in saving for the present distracted generation the stabilizing influence of a culture which, while it does not guarantee the student his daily bread, will yet secure for him the advantage of a well-trained mind, for which there is no substitute in later life. It is well, at this point, that we should take stock of our teaching. Perhaps our insistence in the past on syntax was not wisely tempered; perhaps it was our deadness in teaching syntax that earned for us the ridicule of the world. If so, let us be wise hereafter and teach Latin in a living way. It were supreme folly to throw it overboard, or even to go on tempering it to the shorn lamb. In the study of the modern languages, we do not delve into grammatical inquiries, it is true. But to apply this principle to our teaching of Latin were fatal folly.

With our backs, therefore, firmly leaning against this wall of mental discipline through insistence on syntax, we can safely go in search of ways and means of making Latin interesting. Beginning with the first year, some conversation can be introduced, by means

of simple sentences based on the declensions as they come. In a later stage, stories in words already familiar can be mimeographed and given to the pupils for silent reading. Attention should be constantly called to the terminations that are of most frequent occurrence. Thus the pupil will acquire a conscious power over the forms most frequently met with in Latin authors, and feel encouraged on finding that he can recognize them when they occur.

Yet, when all has been said, it is necessary to add that the enthusiasm of a gifted teacher is alone able to fuse all these scattered elements of creating interest into one grand whole. As an immense globe resting on a smooth surface brings all its weight to bear upon it through one tiny point of contact, so the vast variety of educational means, helps, and devices must, to be effective, reach the pupil's mind through this one point of contact: the enthusiasm of a gifted teacher. This lacking, all is lacking. Of motives for us to strive earnestly in our attempts, there is no dearth. The Catholic teacher finds an additional incentive in the fact that, by his teaching of Latin, he opens to the pupils the treasures of the Church's vast and wondrous liturgy.

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SISTER CECILIA GERTRUDE

Our Need of the Classics*

In a book on "Roman Farm Management" containing translations of Cato and Varro by a "Virginia Farmer" (who happens also to be an American railroad president), there is quoted in the original Latin a proverb whose practice not only gave basis for the proud phrase "*Romanus sum*" but also helped to make the Romans "a people of enduring achievement." It is "*Romanus sedendo vincit*." For, as this new-world farmer adds by way of translation and emphasis, "The Romans achieved their results by *thoroughness* and *patience*." "It was thus," he continues, "they defeated Hannibal, and it was thus that they built their farmhouses and fences, cultivated their fields, their vineyards and their oliveyards, and bred and fed their livestock. They seemed to have realized that there are no shortcuts in the process of nature and that the law of compensations is invariable." "The foundation of their agriculture," he asserts, "was the *fallow*"; and concludes, commenting upon this, that while "one can find instruction in their practice even today, one can benefit even more from their agricultural philosophy, for the characteristic of the American farmer is that he is in too much of a hurry."

This is the only by way of preface to saying that the need in our educational philosophy, or, at any rate, in our educational practice, as in agriculture, is the need of the *fallow*.

It will be known to philologists, even to those who

*An address by John H. Finley, one-time Commissioner of Education of the State of New York, delivered before the National Classical Conference at Milwaukee in 1919, and here reprinted with slight omissions by kind permission of the author, because of its pertinence to present-day educational problems.

have no agricultural knowledge, that the "fallow field" is not an idle field, though that is the popular notion. "Fallow" as a noun meant originally a "harrow," and as a verb, "to plough," "to harrow." "A fallow field is a field ploughed and tilled," but left unsown for a time as to the main crop of its productivity; or, in better modern practice, I believe, sown to a crop valuable not for what it will bring in the market (for it may be utterly unsalable), but for what it will give to the soil in enriching it for its higher and longer productivity.

I employ this agricultural metaphor not in ignorance; for I have, out on these very prairies, read between corn-husking and the spring ploughing Virgil's *Georgics* and *Bucolics*, for which Varro's treatises furnished the foundations. And I have also, on these same prairies, carried Horace's *Odes*, in the spring, to the field with me, strapping the book to the plough to read while the horses rested at the furrow's end.

Nor do I employ this metaphor demeaningly. Nothing has so glorified for me my youthful days on these prairies as the associations which the classics, including the Bible, gave to them on the farm; and also in the shop, I may add, for it was in the shop, as well as on the farm, that I had their companionship. When learning the printer's trade, while a college student, I set up in small *pica* my translation of the daily allotment of the "Prometheus Bound" of Aeschylus, and that dark and dingy old shop became the world of the Titan who "manward sent Art's mighty means and perfect rudiment," the place where the divine in man "defied the invincible gesture of necessity." And nothing can so glorify the classics as to bring them into the field and into the shop and let them become woven into the tasks that might else seem monotonous or menial.

In a recent editorial in the *New York Times* it was said that the men and the times of Aristophanes were much more modern than the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes. But this was simply because Aristophanes immortally portrayed the undying things in human nature, whereas the issues associated with this particular administration were evanescent. The immortal is, of course, always modern, and the classic is the immortal, the timeless distillation of human experience.

But I wander from my thesis which is that the classics are needed as the *fallow* to give lasting and increasing fertility to the natural mind out upon democracy's great levels, into which so much has been washed down and laid down from the Olympic mountains and eternal hills of the classical world.

Cato, when asked what the first principle of good agriculture was, answered "To plough well." When asked what the second was, replied "To plough again." And when asked what the third was, said "To apply fertilizer." And a later Latin writer speaks of the farmer who does not plough thoroughly as one who becomes a mere "clodhopper." You will notice that it is not sowing, nor hoeing after the sowing, but ploughing that is the basic operation.

It is the sowing, however, that is popularly put first in our agricultural and educational theory. "A sower

went forth to sow." A teacher went forth to teach, that is, to scatter information, facts;—arithmetical, historical, geographical, linguistic facts. But the emphasis of the greatest agricultural parable in our literature was after all not on the sowing but on the soil, on that upon which or into which the seed fell,—or as it might be better expressed, upon the *fallow*. It was only the fallow ground, the ground that had been properly cleared of stones, thorns and other shallowing or choking encumbrances, that gave point to the parable. It was the same seed that fell upon the stony, thorny and fallow ground alike.

There is a time to sow, to sow the seed for the special crop you want; but it is after you have ploughed the field. There is a time to specialize, to give the information which the life is to produce in kind; but it is when you have thoroughly prepared the mind by its ploughing disciplines.

I have lately seen the type of agriculture practised out in the fields that were the Scriptural cradle of the race. There the ploughing is but the scratching of the surface. Indeed, the sowing is on the top of the ground and the so-called ploughing or scratching in with a crooked stick comes after. Contrast this with the deep ploughing of the West, and we have one explanation at least of the greater productivity of the West. And there is the educational analogue here as well. In those homelands of the race, the seed of the mind is sown on the surface and is scratched in by oral and choral repetitions. The mind that receives it is not ploughed, is not trained to think. It merely receives and with shallow root, if it be not scorched, gives back its meager crop.

There must be ploughing before the sowing, and deep ploughing if things with root are to find abundant life and fruit. And the classics to my thought furnish the best ploughs for the minds,—at any rate for minds that have depth of soil. For shallow minds, "where there is not much depth of earth," where, because there can not be much root, that which springs up withers away, it were perhaps not worth while to risk this precious implement. And then, too, there are geniuses whose fertility needs not the same stirring disciplines. There are also other ploughs, but as a ploughman I have found none better for English use than the plough which has the classical name, the plough which reaches the sub-soil, which supplements the furrowing ploughs in bringing to the culture of our youthful minds that which lies deep in the experience of the race.

There are many kinds of fallow as I have already intimated. The more modern is not the "bare fallow" which lets the land so ploughed and harrowed lie unsown even for a season, but the fallow, of varied name, where the land is sown to crops whose purpose is to gather the free nitrogen back into the ground for its enrichment. So is our following by the classics not only to prepare the ground, clear it of weeds, aerate it, break up the clods, but also to enrich it by bringing back into the mind of the youth of today that which has escaped into the air of the ages past through the great human minds that have lived and loved upon this earth and laid themselves down into its dust to die.

New York City, N. Y.

JOHN H. FINLEY

Archaeological Work in Rome

I presume most American teachers of the classics are more or less familiar with the larger developments in the archaeological work in Rome during the past several years. The most striking things, of course, have been the openings of the two new boulevards, the Via dell' Impero and the Via del Mare. The former is now perhaps the most spectacular thoroughfare in Rome, leading from the Piazza Venezia to the Colosseum across the area of the Imperial Fora, past the excavations of the Fora of Trajan, Caesar, Augustus, and Nerva, and lying adjacent to the buildings on one side of the republican Forum Romanum. The Via del Mare, which turns to the right as one goes from the Piazza Venezia, skirts the Capitoline Hill, running past the foot of the steps leading up to Santa Maria in Aracoeli and those leading to the statue of Marcus Aurelius before the Capitoline Museum and the Museum of the Conservatori, and then curves past the theatre of Marcellus, whose arches now rise beside one as his bus goes along the road-way.

But archaeological work did not stop with these and other contemporary developments. During a three months stay in Rome I have often noticed carts carrying away dirt from some site where the archaeologists are busy. There are interesting projects here and there, but perhaps the most important development is the wholesale clearance of the area around the Mausoleum of Augustus, the interior of which has for many years served as the concert hall of Rome. The progress of demolishing the houses for several city blocks around has proceeded most noticeably since the first of December, when I arrived in Rome, and the building, when isolated, will be the center for a great exposition

in honor of the emperor Augustus which is planned for 1937 and 1938. A new concert hall will be built elsewhere in the city.

Archaeological work is going on so fast that all our standard books are now out of date in many particulars, and while all the excavations are published excellently and completely in various places here and there, it is difficult for one to find short descriptions of the new developments as a whole in any single volume. I am therefore glad to call attention to the forthcoming publication by Lovat Dickinson, Limited, of London, of a work by Professor A. W. Van Buren of the American Academy in Rome, entitled *Ancient Rome as Revealed by Recent Discoveries*. I have had a glimpse of the volume in final proof, and think that it will be of interest to American classicists who may desire to gain accurate and concise information concerning what we vaguely call the "new things in archaeology in Rome." The book is to be crown octavo, which means that it could be slipped into an extra large pocket, and will contain plates; and while I cannot guarantee the price, I believe it should not be much over one dollar and seventy-five cents by the time it reaches our side of the Atlantic. Incidentally I might also remark that one of the best ways for an American to keep abreast of the new work in Rome is to follow Professor Van Buren's account which appears once each year in the *American Journal of Archaeology*.

University of Missouri
Columbia, Missouri

W. E. GWATKIN, JR.

In hardly any Greek writing, certainly in no great Greek writing, is content sacrificed to form.—C. M. Bowra.

Christ, The King*

Throughout the world, with flags unfurled
All nations greet Thee King;
In pageant throng, they raise their song
And loyal homage bring.

Once by the prophets taught,
And by the Magi sought,
Then set aside for naught.
O Christ, our King!

Thy blood was shed on gibbet red
Purpling Thy robing's hem;
The crown of thorns Thy brow adorns
As royal diadem.

Out o'er the world's mad din,
Down through the hearts of sin,
Thy death our life will win.
O Christ, our King!

On altar shrine, Thy love divine
Remains to guide our way;
Be Thou e'er meek to those who seek
The royal mercy's sway.

Send forth Thy rays of light,
Thy grace and saving might
Lighting our dimming sight.
O Christ, our King!

Loyola University
Chicago, Illinois

JAMES J. MERTZ, S. J.

*Reprinted from the author's monthly publication, *Della Strada*, for Jan., 1936.

Christus Rex

Totius orbis populi
Te Regem praedicant.
Vexilla pompam decorant
Et sacri moduli.

Te vates concinunt,
Et magi appetunt:
Proh, mali renunt,
O Christe Rex!

De Cruce cruor profluit,
Te vestit purpura;
Corona tamquam regia
Te spina induit.

Dum mundus clamitat,
Et crimen maculat,
Mors Tua vitam dat,
O Christe Rex!

Divinus amor radiat
De aris protegens;
Exaudi, culpae paenitens
Quum reus supplicat!

Da lucem fulgidam,
Potentem Gratiam;
Fac viam lucidam
O Christe Rex!

A. F. GEYSER, S. I.

B Schola Campiana Pratocanensi, in Finibus Wisconsinorum Sita.

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